

Integrated ocean policies – European and US-American approaches

From a policy perspective, oceans are a challenging environment to regulate: its resources, such as fish, are moving across national boundaries, pollutants can spread quickly and their sources can be difficult to track down. Also, manifold usages concentrate in the marine environment, such as transport, the renewable energy sector, and fisheries. Many of these also compete with conservation concerns. This patchwork-like structure has so far also been reflected in similarly incoherent policies. Yet recently, all over the world so-called integrated ocean policies are on the rise. Their aim is to overcome the hitherto fragmented policy frameworks and to address ocean and coast related usage and protection issues in an encompassing and coherent way. Two examples are the European Union's Marine Strategy Framework Directive, adopted in 2008, and the US' National Ocean Policy, which was adopted in 2010. Both approaches eventually pursue similar goals, but use different strategies and methods to achieve them. Developing a detailed understanding of the specific national regulatory regimes on the one hand helps to identify possibilities for improvements, and on the other hand reveals options for international cooperation.

My PhD project mainly focuses on the European Marine Strategy Framework Directive as an example of ambitious European environmental policy making. The main interest lies on the question how encompassing policy frameworks can be developed in a fragmented and diverse political and ecological environment.

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